

**DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**  
**LEPC REPORT**  
**Drafted 17 January 2006**

**LEPC Officers:** Julie Dewey, County Grant Administrator, has volunteered to act as LEPC Secretary. Contrary to what I told you at the last meeting, this is not part of her job description. As is most of the LEPC membership, she participates voluntarily and I am sure you will all join me in welcoming her to the group and in thanking her for taking on these responsibilities. She has already been hard at work distributing the agenda and notice of meeting and in updating the information MT Division of Emergency Services (MT DES) has on file about our LEPC.

**FY 05 Homeland Security Funding:** A recent conversation with Dan McGowan, head of MT DES (and, incidentally, announcer at past Ennis Rodeos) leads me to believe that we will not see FY 05 Homeland Security Grant money until well into the spring of this year. That means we will not have a long time to get that money spent, as the end of that fiscal year comes in October, 2006. This will put an extra burden on your Communications Subcommittee and the LEPC itself but, as noted elsewhere in this report, the five-county consortium (SCMIC) of which we are a part and to which any H.S. grant money will ultimately be distributed, is already at work prioritizing the consortium's overall immediate and near term needs. They are being guided by the plan you and other Madison County public safety and health care people helped CTA, Inc produce over last spring and summer. It looks like there will be a total of somewhere around 7 million dollars available for the entire state. Presumably, all such grant money must be used for communications improvement, but we don't know upon what basis the determination will be made as to which consortium gets how much, if any.

**FY 04 Homeland Security Funding:** Dave Schenk will have more detailed information relative to this grant when he briefs the LEPC on the status of his Communications sub-committee. The 19 XTS 1500, 48 channel portable radios we purchased should be in our hands sometime this week, programmed and ready to use. The remaining 256 channel portable and mobile radios we ordered from Motorola are in Billings now, waiting for us to come up with our channel assignment plan. Arriving at the desired programming for these very capable radios has been a more complex task than you might imagine but, thanks to the conscientious leadership of Joe Husar and Under Sheriff Roger Thompson and the active participation of several others, we are getting there. This will pretty well complete our purchases with FY 04 HS money.

**Emergency Operation Plan Overhaul:** Big Sky Hazard Management sent all the LEPC members their latest draft of the main body of the County Disaster and Emergency Management Plan in December, asking for comments by 15 January. The final comments are being incorporated into the plan this week and, in the words of Pam Shrauger, "We are very close to an adoptable plan." If you have held anything in reserve that you want considered for this document, you need to make your wishes known ASAP.

**Evacuation Plan:** Drafting the county Evacuation and Quarantine Plan (an annex to the Disaster and Emergency Management Plan) is proceeding well. The group of volunteers that has been working on this plan (Dan Rask, Melinda Tichenor, Roger Thompson, Mary Van Zandt, Joe Husar, Jill Steeley, Janine Clavadetcher and Molly Peterson) met on 5 January and will meet again on 31 January. The hope is that the plan can be completed around the end of February, or at least in time for the LEPC to consider it at their March meeting, maybe earlier.

**SCMIC:** The SCMIC Governing Board met on 4 January in White Sulphur Springs and will meet again on 1 February in Big Timber. As I mentioned elsewhere in this report, the consortium has begun integrating the immediate and near term communications needs of the individual counties

into an overall prioritized list of what CTA has identified as shortfalls that should be addressed when, as and if funds become available to fix them. As a general statement, the members agree that Madison County is in need of more “catch up” effort than any of the other four counties. The members also agree that, lacking communications, there can be no interoperability. Presumably these views will be reflected in the SCMIC priority list that is to be developed. As with the other eight consortia in Montana, we are becoming increasingly aware that Homeland Security money is not going to be the sole source of funding to take care of all our interoperable communication needs. In fact, given the current congressional and executive branch climate in Washington, the prospects are that, barring some large, unforeseen event, homeland security grant money availability is more likely to reduce than increase. Current estimates are that, to accomplish all the work Montana feels it needs to achieve truly interoperable public safety communications, at least \$160 million will be required, probably more. Competition to get a share of whatever lesser amounts can be located could well become fierce.

**CCC:** Melinda will give a full report of the activities of this LEPC sub-committee at the meeting. We must apply for the FY 05 CCC grant funds to continue support of this program before the end of this month. You should at least have a draft of this application to look over at this week's meeting. The program got off to a good start in 2005, despite the very limited time the sub-committee members had to accomplish their desired goals. They need your continued strong support in 2006 and thoughtful comments on the draft application will be appreciated.

**Wildland/Urban Interface:** This program is languishing. Jim Morrison, who headed the effort to aid homeowners in forming defensible space around their homes (and thereby increase survivability prospects in the face of wildland fire) has left us. There is currently a pot of money allocated to the County to implement the project but, at present, no one to carry out the coordination and “selling of the program” necessary to make it a success. I will be meeting with Judie Tilman of Headwaters RC&D about this during the next week or two. Your support is needed, as are any thoughts or recommendations you might care to provide.

**Emergency Management Department Status:** The Board of Commissioners has voted to continue support of the Department at least through the remainder of the County Fiscal Year, which ends 30 June 2006. This represents a substantial commitment on the part of Madison County to emergency planning and coordination. They will discuss long range plans for the department on 23 January. As a principle source of advice to the Commissioners for matters related to emergency and public safety planning, it is appropriate that you make your recommendations known, both officially as the LEPC and in whatever manner you choose as concerned citizens, should you wish to do so.